

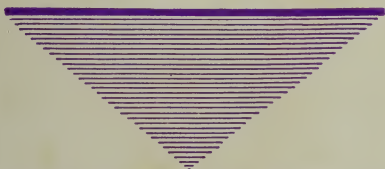
Thoughts on the
Passion

AEB 2530 (New)

Thoughts

ON THE

PASSION



FOR EACH DAY IN THE WEEK

THOUGHTS ON THE PASSION

ARRANGED FOR
EACH DAY OF LENT



NEW YORK, N. Y.
THE PAULIST PRESS
401 WEST 59TH STREET

Approved:

✠ JAMES, CARD. GIBBONS,
Archbishop of Baltimore.

January 20, 1887.

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED IN THE U. S. A.
BY THE PAULIST PRESS, NEW YORK, N. Y.

A THOUGHT ABOUT OUR LORD'S PASSION FOR EACH DAY OF LENT

First Day. "Being come to the place called Gethsemane, He said to His disciples, 'Sit you here while I pray.'" Jesus being overwhelmed with sorrow, has recourse to prayer. It is the magnet of the saints; they always find there, if not repose, at least courage and strength. He separates Himself, not without pain, from His beloved disciples, to pray in profound solitude. There He is to receive His sentence and submit to His Father's will. Learn, O Christian soul, that the best kind of prayer is submission to God's will. O my Saviour! I possess not the requisites of prayer; inspire me with the prayer to obtain them.

Second Day. "Jesus being in an agony, He prayed the longer." Jesus is strengthened by the words of an angel, but He receives no sensible consolation in His pains. His heart

is oppressed with fear and sadness; looking toward the Eternal Father, His anger overwhelms Him; toward His blessed Mother, He is pierced by her sorrow; if He considers the Cross, He is filled with horror. O Jesus! example of the strong! Teach me to serve Thee without consolation! O Strength of the Weak! help me to find comfort in Thy sorrows!

Third Day. “His sweat became as drops of blood, trickling to the earth.” The voice of our sins cried aloud for vengeance, and Jesus opened wide all the pores of His body, as so many mouths pleading for mercy. Our malice being excessive, the satisfaction must be superabundant. Come to this Fountain of Life, all ye who thirst after the sovereign good! Lose not this precious blood which is shed for you! Let it purify your souls, strengthen your wills, regulate your passions, heal all your wounds.

Fourth Day. “Couldst thou not watch one hour with Me?” Judas

watches; the enemies of Jesus are active, and the Apostles are asleep! Thus do we sleep in prayer; sleep in temptation; sleep in our evil habits; sleep in our most important duties. Why do you sleep when you should be watching over your passions, over your thoughts, your whole deportment? Watching to avoid evil, to do good—to save your soul. Lord, I know not how to answer this most just reproach. Confusion is my only excuse; silence my defense. I cast myself upon Thy mercy.

Fifth Day. “Arise, let us go. Behold! he is at hand who is to betray Me.” Divine love has prevailed over the weakness of the inferior part of the soul by means of prayer, which is the nerve of our strength. Jesus says to you, “Arise, let us go” to combat our enemies; to enlighten the ignorant; to visit the poor; to help the sick and the needy; to learn to suffer the miseries of life; to exercise meekness and charity toward all. Arise from tepidity; from sloth; from

indifference. Go forth to earnest effort; to fervor; to generosity.

Sixth Day. "And He said: 'I am He'; and they went backward, and fell to the ground." The Jews seek Jesus as a mortal man, and He makes them feel His hidden power. Even now, that they are plotting His destruction, He gives them the opportunity of seeking His friendship. He could have annihilated them at once, but is satisfied with giving them, by a light chastisement, a chance of entering with themselves. O Jesus! I ask not to be exempt from the punishment I have merited, but I beseech Thee that the pain I suffer may be a remedy for the evils I have committed, and may preserve me from everlasting penalty.

Seventh Day. "They took Jesus and bound Him." The King of kings and Lord of lords is bound as a victim for the salvation of the world. He is bound by the chains of love, for "He loved me and delivered Him-

self for me." He is bound for the consolation of His afflicted servants. Are you in desolation? Call to mind the sorrowful night your Lord spent in chains. Are you pursued by temptation? Bind your will with the chains of Jesus. Are you in humiliation and despondence? Remember Jesus bore a heavy yoke and was manacled as a criminal. O Jesus! who would not be honored by being bound with Thee?

Eighth Day. "And they led Him away to Annas first." Who would not be touched by the meekness with which the Son of God suffers Himself to be led to death? What He endures from the violence of His enemies—from the cords which bind Him—from the blows and injuries of the rabble is inconceivable! He bears it without complaint; without resistance; in profound silence; and thus He atones for your idle and dangerous steps and the many wanderings of your mind and heart. Follow Him in spirit along the thorny

path. O Jesus! grant that I may never stray from Thy footsteps which conduct to eternal life.

Ninth Day. "Jesus enters Jerusalem." He enters the city by the same gate as on the day of His triumph, but now in ignominy. Is it as a king or as a captive that He enters your heart? Does He enter it amid the darkness of sin or in the light of grace? His treatment proves the inconstancy of the human mind; but however He is received by mankind, He is still their redeemer, and never abandons the idea of saving them. Be careful to serve God alike in prosperity and adversity; to thank Him in consolation or desolation, for He is always the same.

Tenth Day. "Jesus is presented to Annas." The divine Redeemer knocks at the door of his heart, secretly reproaching him with his malice and cruelty. Happy had he but recognized his Saviour, but he only stifles all feelings of compassion and leads

Him away a prisoner to Caiphas. Learn to correspond faithfully with grace when it is offered to you, for if you trifle with it it will pass away, and may never return. When the Son of God visits you beware of slighting His presence. Give me, O Lord, a docile heart.

Eleventh Day. “Jesus outraged in the house of Caiphas. And they spit in His face.” The enemies of Jesus can no longer restrain their fury. They load Him with unheard of outrages and cover His face with vile spittle. Behold, Christian soul, this divine countenance, upon which the blessed in Heaven gaze enraptured, now so dishonored. It is the same which the angels contemplate with delight—that imparts consolation to the afflicted—that even the Gentiles desired to see. O Jesus! give me tears to efface these shameful stains, and a heart to love one who suffered such indignities for my sake.

Twelfth Day. “Peter followed afar off. Jesus, turning, looked at Peter.”

Oh! the happiness of Peter, on whom that eye rests, whose glance carries penitence to his soul. A merciful eye, because it turned on him without being sought; most generous eye, for it seeks the disciple who had outraged and denied his Master; a charitable eye, for Jesus forgets His own sufferings to cure the wounds of His servant; most powerful eye, for it raises his courage and melts his heart with sorrow; sweet and precious eye, for it spares the confusion of his crime. O Jesus! cast upon my heart, too, a look of pity.

Thirteenth Day. "Jesus passes the night in prison." Why is the Son of God inclosed in this dungeon? Because He is the prisoner of divine justice. He is abandoned by His disciples; left to the mercy of slaves and servants, a butt for their cruelty and insolence. Go in spirit to console Him in captivity, in the hour of darkness, under the weight of His fetters. O Prisoner of Love! by this night of suffering Thou didst con-

found the sloth and dissipation of worldlings, consuming so many nights in vain amusements. Never permit me to transgress the bonds of submission to Thy holy will.

Fourteenth Day. “And the whole multitude, rising up, led Him to Pilate.” The Jews conspire the death of Jesus, but would have Him perish by the hands of strangers. The Son of God appears in the streets of Jerusalem bound and manacled, surrounded by officers of justice and followed by the rabble. Admire the patience and meekness of Jesus, who submits to all these insults for your salvation. Consider the meeting with the Blessed Mother, who comes forth to offer a sacrifice of resignation and sorrow by her participation in His sufferings. Let us join Mary and follow Jesus to the Cross.

Fifteenth Day. Jesus interrogated by Pilate: “What is truth?” Truth is near us, but, like Pilate, we see it not. It speaks to us interiorly, but

we are deaf to its voice. We see it not because we will not see. Why will we not listen? Because it does not flatter or dissemble. Since truth itself was nailed to the Cross all Christian truths are crucifying. Purify your heart, mortify your passions, be humble and simple, that your interior may be enlightened. Ask with the Royal Prophet: "Lord, send forth Thy light and Thy truth, that they may lead me securely to Thy holy mountain."

Sixteenth Day. "Jesus is silent." "With reason is Jesus silent," says St. Ambrose, "because He needs no defense." It belongs to him who fears being overcome to vindicate himself. The silence of Jesus is the triumph of His innocence; it astonishes Pilate, as well it may, for it is a miracle of patience above the force of nature. It must, therefore, be a virtue precious in His estimation. A Christian without silence is a "city without walls." He who guards his tongue preserves his soul, and he

speaks best who has learned to be silent.

Seventeenth Day. “Jesus clothed with the white garment.” Herod revenges himself by treating Jesus with mockery and scorn; sending Him back to Pilate clothed in a white garment—not as a criminal, but as a fool. Adore your Redeemer under this mysterious garb. It teaches you that the greatness to which He aspires is not of this world, but the sublimity of the Cross, where he will be at once King and Pontiff. Behold the object of your ambition: the Cross and your salvation—the Cross for salvation, and salvation by the Cross.

Eighteenth Day. “Crucify Him! Crucify Him!” Such the shout which rose up from His own people, to whom He had done only good—to whom He had brought light and health, peace and hope. But far, far above it arose the immense chorus of every human soul from first to

last: "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" We have no other hope than in His atonement; no freedom save in His captivity; no life but in His death! And back from Heaven resounded the awful voice of the Eternal Father: "Crucify Him! Crucify Him! He offered Himself, and I accepted. Such is My sovereign will."

Nineteenth Day. "Pilate pronounces sentence, and Jesus by His silence acquiesces, as though He said: 'Father, I am ready to receive the scourge from whatever hand Thou art pleased to ordain.'" Is your heart, like that of Jesus, so submissive to God's orders? What a spectacle to angels and men the Man-God becomes in the pretorium of Pilate. An excess of mercy stripped Him that He might clothe us with peace and virtue. Fly sin, which alone can deprive you of these garments.

Twentieth Day. Jesus cruelly scourged! "We have thought Him,

as it were, a leper, as one struck by God and afflicted." Lord, whence those wounds and that blood flowing from all the members of Thy sacred body? He exposed Himself to the fury of His enemies that, by the excess of His sufferings, the infinitude of His love might be manifested. O Christian soul! behold in these wounds as in so many mirrors the multitude and deformity of sins. Learn, also, the value of your own soul, since it cost your Saviour such a price.

Twenty-first Day. "Jesus suffering at the pillar." The scourge was the punishment of slaves, and Jesus is the Son of God! How, then, can He suffer anything so degrading? Because He has taken upon Himself to atone for the sins of the world. We fly confusion, but few can bear to suffer contempt; pain renders us impatient. Jesus, who knew the necessity and the difficulty, gave us an example in His scourging, and by it merited for us the grace to imitate

Him. Charity stripped; bound, and wounded Him. Let it fasten you to the same pillar by mortification of the body and submission of spirit.

Twenty-second Day. "Pilate, having scourged Jesus, delivered Him to them." Behold your Saviour realizing the description of the prophet. "From the crown of His head to the sole of His feet there is no soundness in Him." His sufferings are surpassed only by His mercies. This gives me confidence to approach and gather into my heart some of this precious blood so profusely shed. O Eternal Father! I offer Thee this blood for my ransom. I am incapable of satisfying Thy justice, but Jesus atones for me. His heart pleads in my favor; His eyes weep for my sins; His veins are drained to purify them.

Twenty-third Day. "Jesus is clothed with the robe of mockery." Behold the Conqueror in His robe of triumph. Conquerors of this world

gain a point of earth. Jesus bears away the Kingdom of Heaven. Others are strong in the multitude of their soldiers; Jesus by the multitude of His wounds; His arms are silence, prayer, tears; His royal purple is His sacred humanity, dyed in His own blood. Christian soul, how can you hope to enter Heaven unless you put on His livery.

Twenty-fourth Day. “Jesus crowned with thorns.” Why do His tears mingle with the blood gushing from His brow? Remember the sins which ought to have made you the scorn of all creatures, and they will tell you that He could not become your representative without being covered with confusion before God and man. There need be no longer on earth thorns to wound us if we render available the crown which encircles our Redeemer; take refuge under the shadow of these thorns to find security against temptation and repose in all our difficulties.

Twenty-fifth Day. "They put a reed in His right hand." The soldiers present a reed to the Son of God, in mockery of His empire, wishing to exhibit Him as king of fools. O King of penitents! this scepter has subdued the haughtiness of the proud; it seems weak and frail, yet it is firmer than iron, for its strength is invincible and its duration eternal. O Jesus, since Thou hast mercifully taken upon Thyself my weakness, vouchsafe to impart to me Thy strength; since I am but a reed take me in Thy hand.

Twenty-sixth Day. "Hail! King of the Jews!" Behold the King of Eternal Glory scoffed by an insolent rabble. Striking His sacred head, they force the thorns deeper into His wounded brow. Amid all these injuries the "Man of Sorrows" remains immovable; compare His meekness with your impatience under the slightest suffering. What mattered it to the Eternal King to become a king of men. He is a ruler

whose power shall never wane, and who openeth a kingdom in heaven to all who center in Him their faith, hope, and love.

Twenty-seventh Day. "Behold the Man." Yet scarcely recognizable as such. Behold the Man, the mirror in which the Eternal Father discovers to men the abyss of His mercy, the abyss of His justice, the abyss of their own malice. Behold the Man, and in Him the melancholy condition of a sinful soul; in Him how innocence is punished for the guilty. Behold the Man! the joy of the blessed in heaven, the man through whom alone we may hope for mercy.

Twenty-eighth Day. "He delivered Him to them to be crucified." The Meek Lamb makes no resistance, because the same love which brought him down from heaven obliges Him to suffer this violence to rescue your souls from the powers of darkness. He is stripped of His garments to teach us that to bear the Cross with

Jesus we must be stripped of all worldly affection, which is a strange robe, and be clothed with the grace with which God covered the first man. O Victim of Love! although I have blushed at Thee, and fled from Thee, cast Thee from me, or turned to Thee with indifference, henceforth Thou shalt be the object of my glory.

Twenty-ninth Day. "Bearing His Cross He went forth to Calvary." He bears the ignominious wood of torture, which He changes into a royal scepter. The Cross is the altar on which He is to be immolated as the victim, not of the temple, but of the world. It is the throne of His love—the instrument of His mercy—the trophy of His victory. O Christian soul, have confidence and fear not. Jesus is strong enough to carry your cross, or, if He desires you to carry it with Him, He will supply you with fortitude and courage. Some reject the Cross; some bear it unwillingly; some with cowardice; some gener-

ously and lovingly. In which class will you rank?

Thirtieth Day. "They forced Simon to carry the Cross." Which he does unwillingly. Why should I be surprised at the repugnance of Simon? Am I any more ready to bear the little daily crosses which Jesus in His love sees fit to fashion for me? Do I not shirk them, avoid them by every possible means; or, if I must carry them, is it not done grudgingly, complainingly? O Jesus! help me to love the Cross, since it is upon it that I shall find Thee.

Thirty-first Day. "Jesus is led to Calvary." Follow your Saviour with confidence and love, since He rejects not the company of sinners. It is not difficult to find the way to Calvary, which is that to salvation, since He has marked it with His blood. Carefully observe the traces of this blood, then observe what footprints you leave behind you on your journey toward eternity. Many followed

Him, but not through pity. Unite with the pious Veronica, that upon your soul as upon her veil may be imprinted the image of His suffering countenance.

Thirty-second Day. "Jesus arrives at Calvary." Behold the place of combat and of triumph! The Cross is planted in the center of the world like the tree of life in the midst of paradise. It was the highest place in Judea, because there the greatest mystery was accomplished. It was out of the city, because Jesus went there to be immolated as the victim of expiation was cast forth from the camp. It is a place of public infamy, exposed to the view of all, and best suited to publish His ignominy to the world. Let us go forth to meet Him and share the opprobrium of the Cross.

Thirty-third Day. "When they came to Calvary, they crucified Him." Jesus lays Himself upon the hard wood of the Cross and offers His hands and His feet to the execution-

ers, which they pierce with cruel nails. Those feet, so often weary with going after sinners — those hands, never raised but to bless or to do good! O my Saviour! fasten my heart with the nails of Thy will to whatever cross it may please Thee to fashion for me, and help me to remain upon it so long as it may please Thee.

Thirty-fourth Day. The title of the Cross: “Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews.” Pilate wrote this inscription, but God dictated it. Whatever might be the intention of the judge, the design of Providence was to show forth the glory of the Crucified and the enormous crime of the crucifiers. Never was title read by so many and understood by so few. Some read and understand not; others read and understand, but fail to profit. But few avail themselves of it. Try to be of that number. Range yourself under the standard of your King and write His law upon your soul.

Thirty-fifth Day. "Father, forgive them; they know not what they do." This cry of infinite mercy was the first which came from the lips of the dying Saviour upon the Cross, before He thought of mother, or of friends, or of Himself. Forgetting those He loves, His first care is of those who need it most. He seeks not vengeance, but pardon; asks not justice, but mercy. Having only His eyes and His tongue free, He weeps and prays for His executioners. He excuses His enemies, and tries to appease His Father's wrath. If Jesus be for us, who shall be against us?

Thirty-sixth Day. "Jesus converts the thief, and manifests the efficacy of His blood." The thief believed in Him when naked upon the Cross; when the Jews crucified and the Pharisees blasphemed Him, when the very Apostles were wavering in their faith. The thief asks only a remembrance, and he is promised a Kingdom. Jesus is silent when

loaded with malediction, but responds at once to the cry of supplication. Dear Saviour, what canst Thou refuse to those who love Thee, since Paradise is opened to Thy very enemies?

Thirty-seventh Day. "Jesus prays on the Cross." Jesus imposes silence on His enemies, while He offers His life in sacrifice for the expiation of their crimes. By silencing His persecutors, He shows His divine power; by observing it Himself, He manifests heroic patience. Every occasion of suffering is a sacrifice God demands; that you may offer it with due respect to His infinite Majesty, recollect yourself, stifle every murmur, let your heart alone speak to God alone. Stand by the Blessed Virgin at the foot of the Cross in darkness and silence.

Thirty-eighth Day. To follow Jesus to Calvary is the most certain proof of love; hence the Virgin Mother approaches nearest to the crucified

Son. O Mother of love and sorrow! obtain for me to love and to suffer after thy example. Woman, behold thy Son! Oh! what a change! John for Jesus; the servant for his Lord; the disciple for his Master; the son of Zebedee for the Son of God! While Jesus died in body Mary died with Him in her heart.

Thirty-ninth Day. "Jesus complains of thirst." He declares His thirst without asking to drink, and in a word comprehends the spiritual thirsts of His soul. First, to do the will of His Father; second, to suffer for us; third, for the salvation of souls. This thirst can never be allayed, since it proceeds from the ardor of His love; His heart thirsts for yours; will you never thirst for Him? You are surprised at the cruelty of the Jews; but what have you done to alleviate His sufferings?

Palm Sunday. Let the entrance of Jesus into Jerusalem on the day of His triumph be a figure of His en-

trance into our hearts. He comes as a Saviour to sanctify us, and to give us a pledge of the felicity He has prepared for us. He comes as the just one to satisfy for us and offer Himself in expiation for us. As the Holy of Holies, He demands our respect; as our Saviour, He requires a firm hope in His mercy. Let us cast off under His feet all the garments of our evil habits, and join in the cry of welcome to the Son of David.

Monday in Holy Week. "It is consummated." All that the Father gave Him to do. He has expiated our sins; completed the work of redemption; preached His Gospel; founded His Church; selected His Apostles. He has exhausted His strength, His blood, His merits. Have you accomplished the work He has given you to do? You sometimes begin well; but have you persevered? Have you nothing to retrieve in the past, to repair in the future? Begin at once, that you, too, may be able to say, "All is consummated!"

Tuesday in Holy Week. "My God! My God! why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Since Jesus offered Himself to the sufferings of the Cross, and endures them all with love and submission, why does He complain? First, to show us how great are His sorrows, for He suffers as man. Second, to teach us that we should complain to God alone in our difficulties. Third, to make us understand that the cause of His sufferings is in ourselves. Christian soul! behold how the Eternal Father avenges in His only Son the crimes of which you are guilty!

Wednesday in Holy Week. "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit." Let us approach and contemplate the spectacle. Hear the cry of your expiring Redeemer. It is loud and strong because your obstinacy is extreme. He recommends, not His body, which He leaves to sufferings and death, but His soul, to teach us that the soul is paramount—if that be saved, all is saved. In

commending His own soul to the Eternal Father He also recommended ours, which are His, having been purchased at the price of His blood.

Holy Thursday. "Jesus took bread, blessed, broke, and gave to His disciples." While His enemies are plotting His death, Jesus invents a means of remaining with us to the end of ages, and becomes our food that He may live in our hearts even after His death. He does this at night as if to hide our crimes from His justice, lest they should bind the hands of His mercy. "Do this in commemoration of Me." Never again is the altar to be without its sacrifice, nor pilgrims through the desert want the heavenly manna. Behold the last bequest of the dying Saviour to the ungrateful world!

Good Friday. "Bowing His head, He gave up the Ghost." Having endured all that the cruelty of His enemies could invent, Jesus submits

to death, the last of temporal evils; He died to repair the outraged honor of the divinity, and to redeem us at the price of His own life. You do not belong then to yourself, but to Him, who has purchased you at such a price. Let Jesus live in your thoughts by perpetual remembrance; in your heart by love; in your words by prayer; and in all your actions by directing them to His glory.

Holy Saturday. “Jesus laid in the tomb.” Joseph and Nicodemus, with loving hands, detach His precious body from the Cross. Whose arms so fit to receive it, as those which first bore Him in all His infantine loveliness in the stable of Bethlehem? Have you a new tomb ready for Him in your heart? Have you the fine linen of restored innocence, the sweet spices of virtues and good works, with which to embalm His body? O Mary! I caused His sufferings and your pain, but obtain for me now so to live that His death may not have been in vain for me.

Easter Sunday. "He is risen! He is not here!" Consider the glory of the blessed body of Jesus, when reunited to His soul, free from all infirmity, its wounds changed into so many sources of light. The glory of the divinity shines forth from the tomb, from which He issues as sovereign Lord of life and death. He comes forth risen from weakness into power and strength, from the ignominy of His passion into honor and glory. So let it be said of you, "He is risen! He is not here!" Risen from the tomb of sin, of evil habits, of indifference. Risen from forgetfulness of God, from uncharitableness, from self-indulgence.

